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SUBJECT: KURDISH PARTIES SAY THEIR DELEGATION TO ANKARA
WELL-RECEIVED

REF: BAGHDAD 3779 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is an Erbil Regional Reconstruction Team message.

11. (C) Summary: In a November 17 meeting with RRT Off, Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU) Secretary General Salahaddin Bahaddin indicated that the Turkish government was considering a proposal for direct Turkish-KRG discussions put forward during the November 11 visit to Ankara by a Kurdish political parties' delegation. An encouraged Bahaddin emphasized the delegation had been well-received in Ankara and suggested it may now travel to Iran within the next two weeks and then on to Syria to promote its message of dialogue and peaceful resolution to the PKK crisis. Bahaddin noted that the KRG was taking concrete steps to shut down PKK activities. Nonetheless, he expected a Turkish attack to occur in less than two weeks. End summary.

Kurdish Political Parties Delegation Well-Received

12. (C) Bahaddin characterized as positive the November 11 visit to Ankara by the Kurdish political parties delegation. Fears that the delegation would not be well-received proved unfounded, he said. Bahaddin claimed that Turkish interlocutors, notably Ahmet Davutoglu, advisor to Prime Minister Erdogan, and Egemen Bagis, AKP representative, had taken aboard the delegation's core messages -- the need for a peaceful resolution to the crisis; that Iraq must not involve itself in Turkey's internal affairs; and that Turkey and the KRG were united against the PKK. The Turkish side stated that Turkey also hoped for a peaceful solution, but stressed that the Turkish public had lost patience on the issue. The Turks expressed frustration with the Iraq-U.S.-Turkey dialogue launched over 15 months ago, saying it had resolved nothing, Bahaddin said. They also alleged that since 2003 the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, comforted by the strong U.S.-Kurdish relationship, had not felt compelled to act against the PKK. Turkey underscored to the delegation that the PKK was a terrorist organization that must be shut down.

Government of Turkey and KRG Negotiations

13. (C) Bahaddin reported that the delegation had suggested that the Turkish government have face-to-face talks with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) officials. While GOI and GOT discussions are positive, he said there needed to be a direct line of communication between the GOT and the KRG. The delegation's Turkish interlocutors received the suggestion positively, according to Bahaddin, who was awaiting a response on whether a Turkish delegation would now travel to the Kurdistan region or vice-versa. He said the KIU representative in Ankara was following up on the response.

Delegation's Next Steps: On to Iran and Syria?

¶4. (C) When pressed by RRTOff on the importance of the KRG producing concrete results to end PKK's presence in the Kurdistan Region, Bahaddin replied that the PKK problem will not go away, as Iran is also part of the problem. He added that the delegation's next steps possibly included a trip to Iran within the next two weeks, with possible follow-on travel to Syria. The delegation planned to carry the same message that they took to Ankara, that peaceful dialogue was the solution to the PKK crisis.

Concrete Steps Taken to Shut Down PKK

¶5. (C) Bahaddin indicated that KRG Prime Minister Barzani had assured the delegation, prior to departing for Ankara, that the KRG had committed itself to ending the PKK presence in the Kurdistan Region by increasing inspections at the airports and at Makhmour Refugee Camp. Bahaddin noted that the (PKK-sympathetic) Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party offices had been closed in his neighborhood, and that an Austrian journalist with whom he had met recently was denied permission to travel to PKK-controlled territory. Additionally, KIU members living near Makhmour Camp had reported an increase in checkpoints.

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